

Claims 6 and 8-10 have been amended to correct the informalities indicated in the Office Action; therefore, Applicant submits that the objections thereto have been overcome.

Claim 13 has been amended to correct the informalities indicated in the Office Action; therefore, Applicant submits that the Section 112, second paragraph rejection has been overcome.

A terminal disclaimer has been attached hereto; therefore, Applicant submits that the double patenting rejection of claims 1-15 has been overcome.

Applicant respectfully traverses the Section 102(a) rejection of claims 1-7 and 9-14 because the '222 publication does not meet the requirements for a Section 102(a) rejection. Specifically, the present invention claims priority under 35 U.S.C. §120 to U.S. Patent Application No. 09/665,646, which was filed on September 19, 2000, and has correlation thereto, for example, as discussed in connection with the double patenting rejection on pages 4-6 of the Office Action. The cited '222 publication has a filing date of April 25, 2001, which is after the priority date of September 19, 2000. Therefore, the '222 publication is not "described in a printed publication ... before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent," as required in Section 102(a). Applicant further submits that the '222 publication fails to teach or suggest elements that correspond to the claimed limitations of the present invention. Applicant requests that the Section 102(a) rejection be removed.

Applicant traverses the Section 103(a) rejection of claims 8 and 15 over the '222 publication in view of the '535 reference for the reasons stated above in connection with the impropriety of the Section 102(a) rejection. Furthermore, as the Office Action acknowledges on page 9, the '222 publication fails to teach or suggest limitations including "using the computer arrangement to match a reticle serial number and a wafer lot to an event on a processing line." However, the Office Action failed to cite any evidence of motivation for modifying the '222 publication to arrive at the claimed limitations of the present invention. For example, there is no cited evidence in the Office Action of how one skilled in the art would be motivated to add the asserted advantages of the '535 reference, listed on page 10, to the '222 publication. Relevant case law indicates that, without such evidence, there is no motivation for making the asserted modification.

In view of the above, Applicant submits that each of the claims is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections, along with a favorable response, are earnestly requested.

Should there be any remaining issues that could be readily addressed over the telephone, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at 651/686-6633.

CRAWFORD PLLC
1270 Northland Drive, Suite 390
St. Paul, Minnesota 55120
(651) 686-6633

By: Eric J. Curtin
Name: Eric J. Curtin
Reg. No. 47,511

Encl:
Terminal Disclaimer

Appendix of Marked-up Changes

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/010,412

6.(Amended) The method of claim 5, wherein storing mask data includes: using the computer [arrangement] to track the condition of each mask, the mask condition including particle contamination, mask degradation, number of exposures, number of times mask is handled and mask structural defects /wherein the masks are selected from the group consisting of reticles, wafer processing masks and solder bump masks.

8.(Amended) The method of claim 6, wherein said storing mask data includes: using the computer [arrangement] to match a reticle serial number and a wafer lot to an event on a processing line and storing match data as part of the mask data set.

9.(Amended) The method of claim 1, further including matching the mask to a carrier, the carrier having a carrier identification code, and storing the carrier identification code data as part of the mask data.

10.(Amended) The method of claim 1, further including tracking the mask movement from a material stocker, through a stepper and through an inspection tool while in [the] a mask pod.

13.(Amended) The system of claim 10, wherein the mask data set further includes a tool identification code, generated when the mask arrives to a new tool location, that is stored in the computer [arrangement] means.